

INTRODUCTION

HIRST, KIDD and RENNIE LIMITED
ANNUAL STATEMENT TO IPSO
(January - December 2015)

INTRODUCTION

The Oldham-based family-run business has been involved in publishing for 162 years. The main title is the Oldham Evening Chronicle, printed Monday to Friday and sold across the Oldham Metropolitan Borough and beyond. Circ: 8,000.

Also published under 'Extras' are a series of monthly free titles that cover Oldham, Saddleworth and Tameside.

In November, 2015, The Dale Times was produced as an addition to this stable, covering Rochdale.

The Managing Director/Editor is David Whaley. He can be contacted at 172 Union Street, Oldham. OL1 1EQ; [REDACTED] or by email [REDACTED]

EDITORIAL STANDARDS

The newspaper has a proud reputation for reflecting the life of Oldham and for doing this in a way that is not sensationalised or confrontational.

The newsroom is built on a trust that has developed with partner organisations and individuals over many years. Our journalists sign up to adhere to the Code as part of the terms and conditions of employment.

Not everyone will agree with everything that we write but we do look to make all our stories decent, honest, trustworthy and balanced.

In fact we will often hold back stories (sometimes to our detriment if others run the story before us) to make sure that we give people the chance to comment on accusations. Reporters know that getting both sides to the story is very important.

Such is the nature of our very local 'news' we have only rarely felt the need to call on the services of the IPSO team for advice but would not hesitate to do so if the circumstances justified it.

We maintain a full audit trail of all items used in the newspaper for future reference.

Hirst, Kidd and Rennie do not have any editorial codes, manuals or written guidance that it provides to its staff in regards to editorial matters

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

The first port of call for most people wishing to complain about a story will often be to the reporter who wrote the original article. On other occasions the call or email will come directly to the News Editor and there are those that go direct to the Editor.

All three connections with the newspaper will result in the Editor being informed of such dialogue and what efforts have been made to resolve any dispute.

The Reporter, News Editor (and Sub Editor and Photographer if relevant) will be part of the discussion process that would follow any legitimate complaint.

It is newspaper policy to attempt to deal with any printed apologies or corrections in the next available issue.

Readers of the Newspaper are informed of their right to contact IPSO in a panel printed daily on the newspaper's Letters to the Editor page (page 10).

OUR TRAINING PROCESS

Our News Desk regularly briefs the reporting team on aspects of the Editors' Code. The current reporting team are about to be put through a training programme in converting computer systems. This has afforded us an ideal opportunity to invoke additional training. This will involve 100 per cent of the editorial team. This is something that will be done annually from this point forwards.

OUR RECORD ON COMPLIANCE

Only four times in the last five years has the path of a formal complaint to the regulatory body been invoked.

In three of these cases the regulator ruled there was no case to answer. In the fourth and most recent case - which falls within the period of this statement - a personal letter of apology was written to the father of a man who was subject of an inquest hearing (Ref: 06244-15).

The newspaper accepted an inaccurate and misleading headline on the 'wrap' of the day's edition. The front-page headline was accurate but this was covered on the news-stand by the 'wrap'.

It also accepted the family's criticism that they were not approached by the reporter for comment after the verdict.

We had, erroneously, been told that the family did not want to speak to the press and kept our distance. We have since changed our protocol at interviews to make sure that we are fully aware of the family's wishes on further talking to the press post-verdict.

The editorial team involved in that day's product were taken to task over the error.

The newspaper's head of HR [REDACTED] keeps a list of all complaints and their outcomes and the correspondence involved is kept with the Editor.